

ABRAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Medical Officer's Annual Report for 1896.

ASHTON,

FEBRUARY 20th, 1897.

To the Chairman and Members of the Abram Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the 21st time, along with the usual tables A and B of the Local Government Board, and table C of the County Council.

The *General Death Rate* as calculated upon a population of 4,805, as estimated to the middle of the year, is 20·6 per 1,000, as compared to 20·8 in 1895, 17·3 in 1894, and against a mean of 20·3 for the decade 1886-95.

The *Zymotic Death Rate* is 4·3 per 1,000, against 4·2 in 1895, 1·08 in 1894, and 3·4 for the decade. Contributory to keeping up the General Death Rate, has been a slight increase in the average from Phthisis and Respiratory Diseases – but Measles, chiefly, with a little increase in Fever and Diarrhœa—has upheld the Zymotic, as well also as sustaining the general rate.

The *Infantile Death Rate* shows a fall from 192 in 1895 to 177 in last year, against a mean of 159 for the decade.

The following table shews this class of mortality for past three years:—

	1894				1895				1896		
	Under 1 month.	Up to 1 year.	Deaths.		Under 1 month.	Up to 1 year.	Deaths.		Under 1 month.	Up to 1 year.	Deaths.
Respiratory Diseases	...	6	6	.....	4	12	16	.....	2	7	9
Intestinal (Gastro Enteric)	...	6	6	.....	2	8	10	.....	1	5	6
Wasting Diseases of Infancy	4	0	4	... ..	6	2	8	.....	6	1	7
Convulsive ditto	0	10	10	.....	2	...	2	.....	5	5	10
Tubercular ditto .....	...	...	...	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	4	22	26	.....	14	22	36	.. ..	14	18	32
Zymotic: Scarletina .....	...	...	...	.....	...	2	2	.....	...	...	...
Measles ... ..	...	...	...	.....	...	1	1	.....	...	1	1
Pertussis .....	...	...	...	.....	...	...	...	.....	1	2	3
Diarrhœa .....	...	...	...	.....	...	...	...	.....	...	3	3
	4	22	26	.....	14	25	39	.....	15	24	39

The deaths in children under 5 years of age still run up to an average of nearly two-thirds of the total annually. In 1883, and that year only, did they number less than the total for the several subjoined ages above 5 years.

Twelve persons over 60 years of age died—7 males and 5 females—whose united ages were 843, or equal to an average of 70. Three deaths were uncertified, and one death occurred within the district not belonging thereto. Five inquests were held, in which two fatalities were due to burns, one to suicidal drowning, one to mining, and one to imbibition.

The *Birth Rate* was nearly 45·8, against 43·2 in 1895, and a mean of 43·7 for decade.

<i>Births</i>...	.....	Males 114;	Females 106;	Total 220
<i>Deaths</i> ..	.....	„ 56;	„ 42;	„ 98
		58	64	122 which,

deducting death of an outsider, brings population on 1st January, 1897, to 4,870. I last year referred to my doubts of this estimate being anything like accurate, under the figure, and that it had a material bearing upon the General, Zymotic, and Birth Rates. Six per head per house has usually been taken as representative of the population, and is borne out by figures, viz. :—

In 1871—No. of houses on rate book was 195, which, multiplied by $5\frac{1}{2}$, = 1,072, or by 6, = 1,140, while the actual census population was 1,091. In 1881—houses $439 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ = 2,415, or by 6 = 2,634, actual census 2,627. In 1891—houses $718 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ = 3,900, or by 6 = 4,308, census 4,309. In 1896—houses $978 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ = 5,379, or by 6 = 5,868. Again, houses concerned in notification (56 in number) shew children under 10, 131; 10 to 16, 51; and adults, 181; or equal to $6\frac{1}{2}$ members per house. The average annual increase, as shewn by census, is at the rate of 160, so that by this estimate we should have (4,309 plus 160 x 5 and plus 40 for June quarter) a population of 5,150 to 1st July. This is the lowest estimate, and would reduce General Death Rate to 19·0, Zymotic Death Rate to 4·0, Birth Rate to 42·7, and Respiratory Diseases from 4·99 to 4·66.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND ITS MORTALITY SINCE ADOPTION OF ACT.

								MORTALITY.							
Name on Schedule.		1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896		
Scarlatina		20	74	13	10	52	42	.....	1	5	2	0	5	1	
Erysipelas		3	4	6	3	8	13	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Memb. Croup		3	1	1	1	1	...	.....	1	1	1	1	...	...	
Diphtheria		...	5	...	2	1	1	.....	...	...	...	1	...	1	
FEVERS {	Typhoid	1	3	5	2	8	14	...	...	1	3	...	...	3	
	Continued	..	1	...	1	...	...	.....	...	...	...	1	...	...	
	Puerperal	1	...	...	1	...	3	.....	...	...	...	1	...	1	
		28	88	25	20	70	73	..		2	7	6	4	5	6
Not Scheduled—															
Measles		...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	15	...	6	10	
Whooping Cough ...		...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	5	4	2	8	3	
Diarrhœa		...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	3	1	3	
								8	12	28	9	20	22		

With regard to Notification, it will be in your memory that I have had on several occasions to mention some unsatisfactory points in this connection, but I trust the measures adopted will save me any future references.

Table A shews summary of deaths at subjoined ages to be as follows :—Under 1 year, 39; 1 and under 5, 23; total, 62; 5 to 15, 5; 15 to 25, 6; 25 to 60, 13; 60 and upwards, 12; total over 5, 36; gross, 98.

Analysis of Causes of Mortality.—Scarlatina, 1 (under 5); Measles, 10 (all under 5); Whooping Cough, 3 (under 5); Diphtheria, 1 (under 5); Typhoid Fever, 3 (1 under 2 over 5); Diarrhœa, 3 (under 5); Phthisis, 7 (over 5); Rheumatic Fever, 1 (over 5); Respiratory Diseases, 25 (13 under and 12 over 5); Heart Disease, 2 (1 under 1 over 5; Injuries, 4 (2 under 2 over 5); various other non-classified, 38 (27 under 11 over 5); total, 62 under and 36 over 5.

Sickness during the year.—In a mild form Scarlatina continued on from 1895, the bulk of cases occurring in the Plank Lane district, where from February to October 22 cases occurred affecting 14 houses. Warrington Road—January, February, September, October, and December, 9 cases, 5 houses. Bickershaw—4 cases and 3 houses (one being removed to Wigan Sanatorium), July and October. While at Bamfurlong (one a recurrent case January, notified November, 1895), 7 cases 7 houses, January, February, May, June, and November. Total 42, affecting 29 houses. The mortality was equal to 2·4 per cent. of those attacked, against nearly 10 per cent. in 1895, shewing its mildness. The Inspector frequently noting that the case was so mild that child was playing or running about the house.

Typhoid.—Against 8 cases in the previous year we had 14 recorded in 1896, occasioning 3 deaths; while we had only 5 deaths from “Fever” in the 5 years preceding—a like mortality of 3 deaths taking place in 1893. *January*.—505, Bickershaw Lane; Higher Houses, Lee Lane, a gross insanitary condition existing, and overcrowding, doubtful quality and deficiency of water, &c.; 174, Warrington Road. *February*.—101, Lily Lane; 4, Newton’s Fold, Plank Lane, surroundings inferior. *April*.—71, Bolton House Road, Bickershaw Lane. *May*.—At 331, Bickershaw Lane. *June*.—A second case at 174, Warrington Road (clean). *July*.—Two cases 78, Lily Lane. *August*.—Ivy House, Warrington Road; 118, Plank Lane, *dirty house and bad yard*. *November*.—19, Tetley Street, inferior surroundings. *December*.—6, Linburne Street, Bickershaw Lane. Mortality equal to 21 per cent. Age period:—

	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 60	
1895	1	1	1	5	 8
1896	1	4	5	4	 14

In odd instances notification seems to have been given somewhat late on, but Typhoid is sometimes very insidious. Yet it is very desirable to get early information on account of the requisite attention to the dejecta.

Erysipelas.—Of the 13 instances half of them were noticeably slight in character—one or two trivial traumatics. Sanitary surroundings, however, were referred to as inferior in five instances, particularly in Plank Lane, and notification is thus useful.

Diphtheria.—One case, and *fatal*, ran concurrently with *three or four other* members suffering from *Scarlatina* at 347, Warrington Road.

Puerperal Fever.—One of the three cases occurred at an “inferior” block in Talbot Road. There was no evidence of midwives conveying infection, although one was cautioned.

Measles occasioned three deaths during the month of January, all on the Plank Lane side. In March a death in Crankwood Road. At the end of this month there was a remarkably rapid and sudden invasion at Bickershaw, the attendance at Bickershaw Schools being largely reduced. Without delay I went down to arrange for “closure,” but found the then intended examination had been cancelled by the Inspector, and children dismissed. Following up further inquiries, I found also that St. John’s Schools in Warrington Road considerably reduced—for a period of two or three weeks batches of 12 to 14 absentees noted weekly. Both *week-day* and *Sunday* closing was effected on my advice up to April 20, and instructions given to Nuisance Inspector to have the schools stoved. Later it was decided to close both schools for a further week’s period—to the 27th. The mortality was—in April 3, and May 3, all in Bickershaw. Age period of deaths was—under 1, one; 1 to 2, seven; 2 to 3, two. The epidemic was very sharp and decisive, as after May we seemed to be perfectly free

Rapid and easy dissemination of Measles is not difficult of explanation. In the first place it ranks among eruptive fevers as specially liable to attack young children, consequently there is abundant ground for propagation. Its diffusion is favoured by its acute infectivity in the pre-eruptive stage. Regarded too by parents as one of the illnesses of children *which is to be*, the greater perhaps the indifference shewn, and less thought probably as to its serious results. Since compulsory notification of certain named diseases came into force throughout the country, and *not* including Measles, there may exist some reason for “public opinion” retaining old ideas that danger from Measles is comparatively light, otherwise it would have been included, and entailed the greater responsibilities attaching to such as Small Pox, Scarlatina, “Fever,” and Diphtheria. And a large number, luckily running a favourable course, do not come under medical observation; hence, when the fever and rash have disappeared, and only partial convalescence established, children get about early, and, sequela, chest complications come on. Opportunity is well afforded recently of *disabusing* peoples minds, however, on the usually light aspect upon which Measles is commonly looked upon. In a recent official report upon this subject, the Registrar General’s statistics, embraced in a report of an enquiry extending over a period of some 4 or 5 years, by one of the Local Government Board Medical Officers, shew that of the chief Zymotic death rates Measles comes third—next to Diarrhoea being Pertussis, which is very little above that for Measles, while for some years Small Pox, Scarlatina, and “Fever” have been declining. On comparing our rate from Measles during the quinquennium 1876-1880, the decade 1881-1890, and the five years 1891-1895, I find them respectively, 0.10, 1.00 and 1.20, against 0.38 for decade 1871-1880, 0.44 decade 1881-1890, and 0.41 for four years 1891-1894, of those for England and Wales.

The chief and great difficulty, then, is to get information of first cases in localities. And bearing in mind the fairly uniform annual mortality under this head, which is a factor in keeping up a Zymotic death rate to a fairly high average, it is worth your while considering the desirability of adopting voluntary notification on payment of a fee to be decided upon, both from parents and medical attendants, of primary occurring cases. This could be made for a limited period at no very great cost, and we should see what advantages could be practically gained by the trial.

Diarrhoea does not call for any particular comment, since at no period of the year did sickness therefrom assume any frequency, as from any especial cause or influence. The fatalities were confined to young children.

Phthisis showed an advanced mortality upon previous averages; and *Respiratory Diseases*, while nearly equalising the death rate of previous years, being almost 5·0 against 5·1 per 1,000, also shews an elevation in the average for decades. It was heaviest during the months of January (4), April (6), and November (5).

Work during the year.—In addition to the regular and systematic inspections made by myself, I have made other special visits singly, and at times conjointly with your Nuisance Inspector; attended all your meetings, and reported all matters requiring attention at the hands of your Council. The *chief items* arising thereon may be epitomised: Warrington Road.—Found several back-to-back houses, two cases of overcrowding, house unfit for habitation, stopped gullies, and other sanitary defects. Referred particularly to *ashpits* and *yards* generally in blocks of property bounded by Dootson Street, Ashton Street, and School Street, as insanitary, some of ashpits being wrongly constructed and bad for efficient scavenging. House in Dootson Street *still* internally filthy, and unfit for habitation. Suggested special pails for reception of *Typhoid dejecta*, having found same disposed of by burial in yard—(an impervious covering would have obviated such an *ill advised* proceeding). As requested, I made visits and reported list of back-to-back properties in Talbot Road, Warrington Road, (113, and No. 1 School Street), and others at Horridge's block. At same time noting that drainage and gullies, also reconstruction of ashpits, wanted attention. Also to a stable at Bickershaw Lane; to Measles and closure of schools at Bickershaw Lane, and St. John's in Warrington Road. Special examination by your Nuisance Inspector and myself of Higher Houses, Lee Lane (see paragraph *re Typhoid*), reporting a very insanitary state, gross overcrowding, bad lighting and ventilation, bad drainage, and no water supply—the well dry; a small quantity scooped up for examination being unfit for domestic or dairy purposes. Referred also to my repeated visits to see inside of the house in Dootson Street without avail.

On my advice the Clerk was instructed to get 100 bills of “Suggestions, &c.,” for preventing spread of infectious disease, and to have same posted throughout the district. House in Dootson Street still requiring further repairs. Back-to-back house 113, Warrington Road still in *statu quo*, and also the ashpits at rear of Dootson Street and School Street. Nos. 231, 3, and 5, Abram Brow generally in a very bad state, requiring repairs to floors as well as limewashing; no pantries or back doors; space behind in a wet and filthy condition; the drainage commenced eight or nine months previous being incomplete and unsatisfactory, and the closet accommodation deficient. Property at Howard Street, Plank Lane:—Pantry windows fast, and inside of houses dirty and filthy, several gullies blocked and in an insanitary state. Massey's property, adjoining the highway, having uncovered ashpits, the annexes structurally dilapidated, gullies bad, walls damp, &c. Talbot Road.—Found houses again cracked and fissured (party and other walls) as witnessed on a previous occasion by Members of the Council. Crankwood Road.—Property at this corner wanting a lot of general repair, and remedying of a foul cellar—nuisance from stable drain near to. Abram Brow.—Pointed out necessary requirements, and advising that Clerk should write interested parties to get the yards and limewashing completed. Special visit and detailed report, with certificates, on condition of four houses, Abram Brow. Detailed examination by Nuisance Inspector and myself of property in Warrington Road, pointing out necessary requirements to owner. Insanitary condition at Crankwood Road. Deficient means of ventilation at 517, Warrington Road. To sewage at Strange Common being still in bad condition. Inspection of and report upon Queen's Arms property in Bickershaw Lane, pointing out necessary requirements. Re-examination of properties in Warrington Road, Crankwood Road, and Bickershaw Lane.

The above shews the close attention by your Authority to sanitary matters—a very large amount of improvement having been effected in various parts of the area; in fact, perhaps a *record year of good work*. Some half-dozen or more owners gave us continued trouble, but persistent “pegging away” proved of valuable service in attaining ends. For instance, Dootson Street, Talbot Road, Abram Brow, Warrington Road, and Bickershaw. Unfortunately the nuisances (2) of back-to-back houses are left, but in the near future they must be again approached.

Although the Nuisance Inspector in his statistical report does not allude to all matters receiving attention at his hands, he has been none the less zealous in other points of sanitation, one of which he specially reported, and which to my mind is of the greatest import, viz.: "The unsatisfactory method of making connections with main sewers on the part of owners and builders of property." As instanced by the *cutting of holes into the pipes* instead of fixing joints; putting a 9in. inlet to 6in. outlet; leaving badly filled trenches a danger to the public, &c. These through incompetent workmen. It is very satisfactory that for the future your Council will insist upon all connections to the main sewer being made by its own men.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Act, 1885.—Very considerable attention has been given pertaining to the Cowsheds, and, from the seven or eight reports of the Inspector, *not without cause*. It would appear on an analysis of such, that of some thirty in the district, 50 per cent required considerable alteration and improvement. By the end of the year, assisted by some Members of the Council, however, much good has obtained, yet a remnant exists to be followed up in 1897. There is only one observation I should like to make myself, on looking over the details, that information as regards the water supply seems to be absent. This is an important matter, and I have no doubt will receive attention. The retailing of milk is practically confined to the farmers.

It will be essential during the current year to have regard to what small *workshops* or *factories* exist, and their condition. We have no textile works, and it will be confined to one or two very minor matters. What Bakehouses exist do not call for comment, any nuisance surrounding such being reported; but for the future, in their connection to public health, perhaps closer supervision will be advisable.

As to major questions of importance, it is to be regretted that the "sewage scheme" is not actually commenced, but it has not been for lack of continued attention and interest on behalf of your Council. I hope, and, I am sure you do, that at an early date, all the plans and details of working will receive the sanction of the Local Government Board.

With regard to Hospital provision, this has been considered and discussed. I brought the subject first before you in June, and being unfortunately unable to make terms with any of our neighbours, we had to think for ourselves. As a means for such provision, for a period at all events, I gave my attention to some disused property in a well isolated central locality, but on coming to some decision, your Surveyor regarded the cost of necessary alterations, drainage, water supply, lighting, approaches, and the like, too great for what could be obtained, and we remain as before. However, the Sub-Committee formed, with your Surveyor and myself, must again consider what is best to be done.

Associated with "Isolating Measures" (i.e., Hospital) is the necessary adjunct of "*thorough and efficient disinfection of all exposed articles where an infectious case occurs*," and it is highly improbable, if not impossible, for all soft goods (wearing apparel and the like) to be perfectly freed from infectivity by the present means at our command. A "*Thresh*" disinfector would, I think, meet your requirements for disinfecting purposes, but as a permanent building is essential for *any such kind* of apparatus, it would perhaps be ill advised on my part to urge this in preference to the former for obvious reasons. Practically, they are essentially part and parcel of each other.

Surfaces of Back Yards and Adjacent Spaces, Passages, Back and Side Streets.—To the attendant dangers of a wet and sloppy state thereof I have for some time alluded. I should like your Council to note some of these during wet weather, as at such a time only can the nuisance be properly recognised in its full bearings. Dryness and cleanliness is the remedy, and to secure which, proper shaping of the surface for drainage and disposal of surface water, with impervious covering, is necessary—paving, flagging, or concreting. As stated in my last year's report, your Authority has full power under Public Health Amendment Act of 1890, to deal with this class of nuisance.

I append Nuisance Inspector's report for the year; and, in conclusion, beg to state that a considerable amount of good work has been done, and that next year I shall be able to report a still further achievement in the ways and means for obtaining a clean bill of health.

I am, Sir and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

NATHAN HANNAH,

F. Inc. Soc. of M.O.H.'s.

Stopped Drains and Gullies	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20
Pigeons	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	16
Poultry	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13
Dwelling Houses, Repairs, &c.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20
Foul Ashpits	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13
Slop Pipes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Foul Cellars	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Pig Styes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Back-to-Back Houses	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5

(3 of which have been attended to, and 2 are in abeyance—Mrs. Horridge's).

Stable (in abeyance)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Brick Kilns	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1

Total ... 96

Also some 50 houses stoved and 44 limewashed.



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